

**From** NYU Human Resources <[hr.suggestions@nyu.edu](mailto:hr.suggestions@nyu.edu)>  
**Sent** Tuesday, September 1, 2009 8:41 pm  
**Subject** H1N1 Flu: Fall Preparation for Faculty, Administrators, and Staff

Dear NYU Faculty, Administrators, and Staff,

The start of the academic year at New York University is upon us and we are already welcoming both new and ongoing students back to campus for the fall semester.

As expected, H1N1 flu has remained a focus of attention for health authorities and providers, including campus health officials across the country. Consistent with the advice of public health authorities, NYU plans to remain operational and continue our educational mission in the face of possible outbreaks on campus.

New York University has prepared throughout the spring and summer to address the expected increase in the number of flu cases this fall as students and staff return to classes (please refer to <http://www.nyu.edu/shc/flu> for a brief summary of our planning and the latest updates throughout the academic year). At the same time, NYU's health care providers, Aetna, United Healthcare and Oxford have been preparing contingency plans to ensure that employees will have continuity of care and claims processing.

As faculty, administrators, and staff, we are all dedicated to the University's research and teaching-and-learning missions. For that reason, we are writing you today to remind you of some of the ways in which you can take care of yourself and your loved ones, and also help to prevent the unnecessary spread of flu infection within NYU.

**IF YOU ARE ILL:**

If you yourself have flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, body aches) before coming to work, please wait until you are fever-free at rest (and without fever reducing medication), with a temperature less than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (F) for at least 24 hours before returning to work; this will significantly reduce the likelihood of spreading the flu to others. Please follow the standard call-in procedures established for your division.

If you have any chronic illnesses such as asthma, or diabetes, please make sure that you discuss with your personal health professional any precautions or information that you might need to take prior to the upcoming influenza season. Do not hesitate to discuss your concerns with Carebridge, NYU's Employee Assistance Program, by calling 1-800-437-0911. You can also login to their website at <http://www.myliferesource.com> (NYU access code: FTN59). Carebridge has trained all of its counselors to assist NYU employees with any questions, concerns, or needs they may have concerning H1N1 flu.

**FAQs:**

Below are some of the questions that have frequently been asked about the H1N1 flu, and the answers:

**How will you know if you have the flu?**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines flu-like illness

this way: A fever of 100 degrees F or greater, plus a cough or sore throat and possibly other symptoms like runny nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, vomiting, or diarrhea. Fever is very often a key factor although it occasionally is not present. If you have the other symptoms listed but have no fever, call your personal health professional for advice.

**Where can you go to get help if you are sick with the flu?**

You may not need to see a health professional if your symptoms are mild. When in doubt, call your personal health professional. The vast majority of people who become ill have mild to moderate severity and recover fully in a week or less, without any medical intervention. However, if you are ill with flu and are pregnant or have any chronic illness, please call your personal health professional as soon as possible.

**How can I decrease my chances of getting flu?**

The best way to stay healthy is to wash your hands often and vigorously for 30 seconds with soap and water, cough or sneeze into a tissue, or if not available, into your elbow or sleeves BUT NOT into your hands. Keep your hands away from your face. Hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol are also effective when soap and water are not immediately available, especially prior to eating, or after shaking hands or touching high traffic and high usage hard surfaces (phones, computer keyboards, etc). While you can count on NYU to be vigilant in keeping high traffic areas clean, it is important that each employee take precautions to increase our ability to reduce the spread of germs and flu.

**Flu Shots:**

We expect the "seasonal" influenza vaccine to become available in mid-October and will inform the NYU employee community on how to obtain a vaccination. As in previous flu seasons, you may obtain a seasonal flu vaccination through your personal health professional (applicable out-of-pocket expenses apply per member policy) or through the free seasonal flu vaccination employee events that are held at NYU (dates to be announced). Similarly, when the H1N1 vaccine becomes available (although delays are anticipated), employees will also be notified on how to obtain these vaccinations. Public health authorities will be providing guidance and supplies to health care providers, although the exact mechanism and timing are yet to be determined. When the H1N1 vaccine becomes available through your personal health care professional, we can confirm that NYU's employee insurance plans will provide coverage (applicable out-of-pocket expenses apply per member policy) for the administration of the H1N1 vaccine for all NYU members.

And remember: If your illness, whether due to flu or any other reason, causes you to be out more than 5 consecutive business days, you should call Unum to file a claim for short-term disability. The toll-free number is 1-866-245-2974. Unum has also developed contingency plans to ensure that if you need to file a claim for either short-term disability and/or Family Medical Leave (FMLA), customer care representatives will always be available to assist you.

**RESPONDING TO ILL STUDENTS: GUIDANCE FOR FACULTY, INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF, AND OTHER EMPLOYEES WHO INTERACT WITH STUDENTS ON A REGULAR BASIS**

We have advised NYU students to stay at home or in the residence halls if they

become ill with the flu. Consistent with the advice we have provided you, they have been encouraged not to return to classes until they have been free of fever for a 24 hour period.

**Students' Academic Work:**

We recognize the authority of individual faculty members to make determinations about student academic performance. However, with the advice we have given students about how to handle their flu-like illness to minimize the spread of the virus, we would ask faculty and instructors to be as flexible as possible with absences, academic assignments, and examinations due to flu. Most individuals who have flu will become fever-free in a 5-7 day time frame. We are recommending that students NOT be asked to present a health professional's note as evidence of flu-like illness. To prevent the spread of illness, health authorities are discouraging visits to health facilities solely to request a doctor's note to document absence. Your understanding in this regard will help support the well-being of the NYU community.

Students who come to class visibly ill should be released from class and encouraged to return home or to their residence hall to recover from their illness. Students can also be urged to call the NYU Student Health Center at 212-443-1000 if they have any concerns about their illness.

Please report any significant numbers of illness absences to your School/College Student Affairs Dean's Office as soon as possible. A significant number of illness absences may be roughly defined as 20% of your class in a week.

The University's posture - consistent with the guidance issued by federal health authorities - is to carry on with our classes and operations. However if the situation warrants, NYU could determine that proactive social distancing strategies be employed (e.g., not shaking hands) and/or that congregate activities - including classes - be limited. Accordingly, to the degree possible, faculty should develop backup plans for instruction if congregate activities were to be suspended or canceled for a short period, such as providing assignments or assessments via online technology or other ways that do not require congregation. Similarly, administrators and other staff should have contingency plans for continuing their operations despite absences. We are cognizant that schools and/or disciplines demand varying degrees of face-to-face contact between students and faculty, and therefore are working closely with Student Affairs Deans in each of the schools to help plan for alternative forms of instruction that are specific to those needs. If you have any concerns, please contact the Student Affairs Dean in your school or college in order to plan for and assist with these alternative methods of instruction, should they become necessary. If assistance is required for using any of NYU's online instructional tools (e.g., Blackboard, Webspaces, etc.) please email [askits@nyu.edu](mailto:askits@nyu.edu).

**STAYING INFORMED:**

Stay informed about NYU's contingency plans by checking the Student Health Center website at <http://www.nyu.edu/shc/flu> regularly for advice and updates as we expect that public health guidance will be updated and summarized regularly for the NYU community. For questions about your health benefits, login to NYUHome, click on the Work tab, and click on the Benefits Resource Center button.

Our best wishes for a successful academic year,

Katie Casey, Vice President for Human Resources

Linda Mills, Sr. Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and University Life

Additional resources:

Information on the NYU response to the flu: <http://www.nyu.edu/shc/flu>

Information on the flu from U.S. health officials: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

Recommendations for colleges and universities:

[http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/guidelines\\_colleges.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/guidelines_colleges.htm)

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